



**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N – Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 – (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building – 1111 Washington Street SE – Olympia, WA

**MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (MDNS)**

**Name of Proposal:** WDFW UNION RIVER ESTUARY RESTORATION

**Description of Proposal:**

The Union River Estuary Restoration project is a habitat restoration project based on the design funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in 2010 (Union Estuary Johnson Farm Restoration Design). It is located at the mouth of the Union River in Mason County adjacent to Belfair and is the final piece in a series of large estuarine habitat projects to protect and restore the original Union/Lynch Cove Estuary. The purpose of this project is to restore the estuary and tidal function to over 32 acres by breaching the existing dike in two locations, regrading to elevations similar to adjacent marsh conditions, and accommodating stormwater drainage. The estuarine habitat is designed to replicate surrounding marsh conditions of high salt marsh with tidal channels. This type of habitat is valuable to juvenile Hood Canal summer chum salmon and Puget Sound Chinook (both federally listed) salmon, as well as coho salmon and cutthroat trout. In addition, the Lynch Cove estuarine marsh is used by waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds. One 300 foot breach and another 100 foot breach will allow daily tidal inundation and most habitat forming processes to function, creating maximum value for the scale of the project.

This habitat restoration project has been identified as a priority action in the Limiting Factors Analysis (2003) and the HC summer chum recovery plan (2005). The Union River is identified as a Tier 1 priority watershed (HCCC Salmon Habitat Recovery Strategy 2005) for habitat restoration.

**The proponent shall incorporate the following mitigation measures into the project:**

Community Outreach meetings were held and input also received from technical reviewers from the Hood Canal technical team and Salmon Recovery Funding Board. As a result, project plans were changed to avoid and mitigate potential impacts to trail recreation and potential impacts to adjacent farm fields:

- Retain trails in current location using a bridge over proposed dike openings
- Improve farm fields with beneficial use of spoils in adjacent farm fields
- Improve stormwater storage on adjacent land
- Reduce proposed size of dike breach opening from 700' to 300'.

**Proponent/Applicant:**

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
48 Devonshire Rd  
Montesano, WA 98563  
360-249-4628  
Attention: Mick Cope, R6 Wildlife; Attention: Doris Small, R6 Habitat

**Location of Proposal:** Mouth of Union River, Mason County; Sections 31 and 32, Township 23 North, Range 1 West WM

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law<sup>1</sup> does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this mitigated determination of nonsignificance (MDNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this MDNS according to state rules.<sup>2</sup> We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the MDNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or MDNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **November 16, 2011**.

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Bob Zeigler

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this MDNS or the details of the proposal, contact Bob Zeigler at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-2578.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** November 1, 2011

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).